

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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INTERVIEW OF:
J. BROWN

+ + + +

MARCH 9, 2004

+ + + +

(Transcript produced from audio CD provided by the

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

4:30 p.m.

MR. ROTH-ROFFY (phonetic sp.): Okay.

The time is now about 1630 and the date is the 8th of -- of March and we're here to interview one of the mates on -- on the boat.

Could you tell us your -- your name and your number please?

MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Yes.

MR. TURRELL (phonetic sp.): It's the 9th of March.

MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Today is the 9th of March? Sorry about that.

MR. BROWN: My name is Jason Brown. Telephone number (Deleted).

MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. Jason, then could you tell us where you were on that Saturday?

MR. BROWN: I was on Seaport Taxi Patrick Duffy in Fells Point docked because of the storm when we heard this happen.

MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. What was your -- your schedule that -- that day? What route were you taking?

MR. BROWN: We were taking the inner-loop

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1 route which was from Harbor Place through Fells Point
2 and back again.

3 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. And around --
4 before the -- the time of the -- of the accident on
5 the Lady D, could you -- could you tell us what you
6 recall? Say maybe starting 3:30 or something. What
7 -- you know, your schedule.

8 MR. BROWN: As far as -- well, the only
9 thing I personally noticed was the weather, the
10 clouds coming in. It was getting a little -- it
11 started to rain. It was intermittent rain showers.
12 It was getting a little windy.

13 Nothing I consider personally to be
14 anything serious and I was more concerned with taking
15 care of my passengers and listening to the radio at
16 that point.

17 So, as far -- as far as everything that
18 went by, I really wasn't aware until something
19 terrible had happened. I was thoroughly concerned
20 with my passengers and what was going on as far as
21 where they wanted to go and with being tied up at
22 Fells Point as far as the thunderstorm was concerned.

23 Other than that, I was totally oblivious to what
24 happened.

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1 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: So, your -- your boat
2 was tied up at the Fells Point as -- as part of the
3 normal routine operation? You didn't --

4 MR. BROWN: Right. There was -- there
5 was lightning in the immediate area and as --
6 whenever there's lightning within the immediate area,
7 we also temporarily suspend service because of that
8 and at the time, we were tied up.

9 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. So, you had
10 suspended service because of the -- of the lightning?

11 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

12 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: About what time did you
13 tie up?

14 MR. BROWN: This was -- I'm -- I'm not
15 sure of the -- I'm not really sure of the time. I'd
16 assume 4:00. Around -- around 3:45 to 4:00.

17 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: And why did you tie up?
18 What -- who made that decision and why?

19 MR. BROWN: As far as I'm concerned, it
20 was a mutual decision among the captains to bring the
21 boats to dock because of the conditions.

22 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. Did you hear any
23 type of radio communications to that effect?

24 MR. BROWN: No. No. If they happened, I

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1 -- I wasn't paying attention to the radio.

2 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. Morgan (phonetic
3 sp.).

4 MR. TURRELL: What are your duties here
5 at Seaport Taxi?

6 MR. BROWN: My duties here are to make
7 sure that the customers are safe on-board, to sell
8 tickets to the customers, to announce to them our
9 safety procedures, where the life jackets are,
10 company policy as far as them remaining seated as
11 we're docking the boats and such, supervising the
12 customer's behavior, making sure everybody does
13 what's safe as possible and that's really about it.
14 Tying up and securing the boat at my -- be on the
15 boat at the gas dock, taking care of the lines,
16 helping the captain in duties, navigation, as far as
17 backing and coming in the docks, being the captain's
18 second set of eyes.

19 MR. TURRELL: Do you ever get train on
20 the (inaudible) in the boat?

21 MR. BROWN: No.

22 MR. TURRELL: How long have you worked
23 here?

24 MR. BROWN: Going on -- in May, it will

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1 be two years.

2 MR. TURRELL: Are you working on your
3 Coast Guard license?

4 MR. BROWN: No, sir.

5 MR. TURRELL: Do you know the individual
6 crew members that were involved?

7 MR. BROWN: Yes, I do.

8 MR. TURRELL: Have you ever worked with
9 Captain Frank?

10 MR. BROWN: Yes, sir.

11 MR. TURRELL: What's Captain Frank like
12 as a boat handler?

13 MR. BROWN: Absolutely great. I think
14 he's fine.

15 MR. TURRELL: How often have you had a
16 chance to work with him?

17 MR. BROWN: This was -- well, since last
18 year. Not much. Not many opportunities.

19 MR. TURRELL: So, you'd say half a dozen,
20 a dozen?

21 MR. BROWN: I'd say about a dozen
22 altogether.

23 MR. TURRELL: So, maybe 12 days or so?

24 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

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1 MR. TURRELL: And what's he like to work
2 with? What's -- as a -- as a (inaudible)?

3 MR. BROWN: He's very personable. He's a
4 very nice gentleman and I think he does his job
5 great.

6 MR. TURRELL: Jim.

7 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Have you ever been out
8 on the water here in a -- in a thunderstorm or rain?
9 Have you ever been --

10 MR. BROWN: In the rain. Regular rain
11 showers and storms.

12 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: What -- have you ever
13 worked on the particular vessel the Lady D?

14 MR. BROWN: Yes.

15 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: When you were on that
16 boat, what are your -- how do your duties change?

17 MR. BROWN: It's -- it's more intimate
18 because it's such a smaller vessel. It's easier more
19 so to keep an eye on all of the customers. Most
20 times the Lady D was on the Fort McHenry loop.
21 Therefore, it wasn't so much ticket sales more so
22 just inspecting tickets that the people have already
23 bought. Sometimes we get to the Fort,
24 we're (inaudible) at our pier. So, my duties would

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1 then include unlocking the Fort McHenry gates and
2 reporting the number of passengers going in and out
3 of the Fort and just normal duties like helping
4 passengers on and off the boat and making sure
5 everyone does it safe.

6 MR. TURRELL: What's the -- has -- does
7 the company have any written guidelines, manuals,
8 procedures that you've seen or been given?

9 MR. BROWN: No.

10 MR. TURRELL: How did you receive your
11 training as a mate?

12 MR. BROWN: When I -- I received my
13 training as mate from supervisors. When I came into
14 the company, I spent I believe it was four days, but
15 -- on-board with a mate who was already employed and
16 a captain and they ran me through the operations and
17 trained me interactively letting me do parts of the
18 job until I got a -- a grasp of it and then I was
19 towing my own boat and supervised then on how my
20 performance was.

21 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

22 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: What did you hear on the
23 radio or what were told about the accident? When did
24 you learn about it and how did you learn about it?

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1 MR. BROWN: The first time I heard
2 anything about the accident was right after we left
3 Fells Point. The captain -- I -- the captain pulled
4 me aside and said we have a problem. Frank's boat
5 flipped over and that's the first time I heard
6 anything about it. I heard no radio transmissions.
7 Although, I'm sure that's where he heard the
8 information from.

9 I didn't hear anything -- the radio.
10 Wasn't paying attention.

11 MR. TURRELL: Okay. I have no other
12 questions right now. Commander.

13 LIEUTENANT COMMANDER HAMMON: A couple.

14 MR. TURRELL: Commander, go ahead.

15 LIEUTENANT COMMANDER HAMMON: Could he
16 identify -- this is Lieutenant Commander Hammon
17 (phonetic sp.), Coast Guard Second of Baltimore.

18 Who was the captain that you were
19 assigned to?

20 MR. BROWN: Captain Jim Nichols (phonetic
21 sp.).

22 LIEUTENANT COMMANDER HAMMON: From the
23 time that you secured your vessel at Fells Point and
24 the time the weather moved through, can you kind of

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1 explain that?

2 MR. BROWN: As far as the weather out --
3 well, we were tied up at Fells Point and I -- I
4 assumed that we were shielded from the elements
5 somewhat by the structure around. It was necessarily
6 that bad. There was minor lightning in the area.
7 Was pretty torrential rain at the time and like I
8 said, as far as wind was concerned, we were out of
9 the way. If any wind was coming in, it wasn't
10 affecting us because we were tied up in Fells Point
11 and there's -- there's, of course, buildings in the
12 way. So, I really couldn't describe the wind. I
13 just didn't know.

14 LIEUTENANT COMMANDER HAMMON: But, you
15 were already in some weather at the time you secured
16 your operation?

17 MR. BROWN: Right. It's -- as a matter
18 of fact, I just finished making an announcement to
19 the passengers that we do temporarily suspend service
20 as a result of lightning and it's -- it's funny. As
21 soon as I got done saying that, it started raining
22 and there were rolls -- rolls of thunder and some
23 lightning and we decided at the dock to tie up and
24 stay there until we -- we deemed it safe to leave.

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1 LIEUTENANT COMMANDER HAMMON: And how
2 long did you have to stay until you deemed it safe?

3 MR. BROWN: Approximately ten minutes.

4 LIEUTENANT COMMANDER HAMMON: That's all
5 I have.

6 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Just to clarify, Jason.
7 When you decided to suspend service, you were
8 already at the pier?

9 MR. BROWN: We had just landed at the
10 pier and there were some thunder and lightning in the
11 area and we decided while we're at the pier, not to
12 leave.

13 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. And you say
14 you've been working with Seaport Taxi about two
15 years?

16 MR. BROWN: About -- almost two years.

17 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Do you have any prior
18 maritime experience?

19 MR. BROWN: No, sir.

20 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: And what is your age?

21 MR. BROWN: I'm 19.

22 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. Yes, I'm sorry.
23 Do you have any questions?

24 MR. NARIZZANO: Yes. Ed Narizzano,

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1 Director of Seaport Taxi.

2 Jason, in the two years of service you've
3 been there, two questions. First one is are they
4 continuous?

5 MR. BROWN: No, sir.

6 MR. NARIZZANO: You left for how long?

7 MR. BROWN: Approximately five months.

8 MR. NARIZZANO: And you came back?

9 MR. BROWN: Yes, sir.

10 MR. NARIZZANO: Did you ever attend one
11 our orientations in the --

12 MR. BROWN: Yes, sir, I did.

13 MR. NARIZZANO: And did we not go over
14 our procedures and -- with handouts and took the test
15 -- evaluation test?

16 MR. BROWN: I can't necessarily remember
17 written handouts, but I do remember extended
18 orientations on the water with physical
19 demonstrations where every mate got a chance to do --

20 MR. NARIZZANO: Did you ever go to the
21 full day -- the full day program (inaudible)?

22 MR. BROWN: I went to the initial
23 orientation (inaudible).

24 MR. NARIZZANO: Okay. And we -- we also

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1 had a man overboard and fire drill?

2 MR. BROWN: Correct. In which we did
3 receive written handouts in those -- in those drills
4 with instructions on-board. We -- all the mates in
5 those orientations and those drills did get the
6 chance to complete the operations and were guided
7 along.

8 MR. NARIZZANO: So, you did get some --
9 you did get formal training?

10 MR. BROWN: In -- in that training, yes,
11 sir, completely formal.

12 MR. NARIZZANO: Did you -- did you work -
13 - did you work with the mate trainers -- one of the
14 two mate trainers we had?

15 MR. BROWN: Yes, sir.

16 MR. NARIZZANO: Did they go over, you
17 know, what you're suppose to do, critiquing and maybe
18 even going over checklists of what -- what --

19 MR. BROWN: Yes, sir, they did. When the
20 mate trainers came on-board, they had a checklist of
21 what the duties were. We usually go for about a
22 round trip. The mate trainer would take notes on my
23 performance and upon their exit to go to another
24 vessel to critique another mate, they'd show me what

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1 I did or did not do, suggest the way I should be
2 doing it and they'd get back to me at a later time to
3 check my performance and see. It was very thorough.

4 MR. NARIZZANO: How often did that
5 happen?

6 MR. BROWN: This happened at least -- the
7 mate trainers were on-board the boat at least once a
8 day and I had at least six sessions with the mate
9 trainer throughout the summer. This was in a period
10 of one month. So, it was completely thorough.

11 MR. NARIZZANO: Thank you.

12 MR. BROWN: You're welcome.

13 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. I guess that's
14 about it, Jason. Thank you very much.

15 MR. BROWN: Thank you.

16 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: I appreciate you
17 spending time with us. It's about 1642 and that will
18 conclude our interview of Mr. Jason Brown.

19 (Whereupon, at 4:42 p.m. the interview as
20 concluded.)

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